cost of Rs. 1126.80 crores was posed to the World Bank on 13.8.2002 for financial assistance. The Project is at preparation stage.

Restoration of LTC for Central Government Employees

2714. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Leave Travel Concession (LTC) for the Central Government Employees may be restored to boost tourism;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it would be extended once in four years for pensioners for encouraging inland domestic travel?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) LTC facility has been restored to Central Government Employees with effect from current block year 2002-2005 for any place in India and 2002-2003 for hometown.

(c) There is no such proposal.

Interest rate on advances to Self-Help Groups

2715. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for Public Sector banks charging 12 per cent interest on advances to Self-Help Groups;

(b) what is the total deposits of the Self-help Groups in the nationalized banks; and

(c) what are the details of advances to Self-Help Groups by the nationalized banks during the last three years, bank-wise?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Banks charge rates of interest on loans to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) within the overall instructions of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). While fixing the rates of interest banks take into account the cost of funds, transaction cost, risk costs and margin. However, as per the present instruction of RBI, commercial